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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EB-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 STR-04 DHA-02 IO-13
ACDA-07 SAB-02 FEA-01 NRC-05 OES-07 ERDA-05 /110 W
----------040104Z 117890 /73
R 040013Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1914
ALL USCONS MEXICO BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 06661

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MX
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S OAS SPEECH - MEXICAN RAMIFICATIONS

REF: (A) STATE 084912, (B) MEXICO 05414, (C) MEXICO 05431

1. AS EMBASSY HAS REPORTED (REFTELS), PRESIDENT CARTER'S SPEECH TO OAS WAS WELL RECEIVED BY GOM OFFICIALS, INCLUDING PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO WHO SENT PERSONAL MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS TO PRESIDENT CARTER. MEDIA AND PUBLIC REACTION, ALTHOUGH FAVORABLE TO GENERAL OUTLINE OF ADMINISTRATION'S LATIN AMERICAN POLICY, HAS ADOPTED WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE CONCERNING PRESIDENT'S ABILITY TO OVERCOME CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER OPPOSITION TO HIS OBJECTIVES.

2. NOT SURPRISINGLY, OFFICIAL AND PRESS REACTION HERE HIGHLIGHTED ANNOUNCEMENT THAT USG WOULD SIGN PROTOCOL I OF TLATELOLCO TREATY AND SEEK SENATE RATIFICATION. AS PRIME MOVER BEHIND LA NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE AND STRONG PROPONENT OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT IN GLOBAL CONTEXT, MEXICO WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED BY THIS DECISION, WHICH IT
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REGARDS AS HOPEFUL SIGN THAT USG IS SERIOUS ABOUT EXPLORING WAYS TO PROMOTE GENERAL DISARMAMENT IN OTHER FORA.

3. PRESIDENT'S SPEECH COVERED BROAD RANGE OF COMPLEX SUBJECTS. WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT AT THIS STAGE OF POLICY FORMATION TO IDENTIFY PRECISELY HOW USG POSITION SET FORTH IN SPEECH WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN RELATION TO

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MEXICO, WE WOULD LIKE TO OFFER FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS.

A. TRADE

MEXICANS ARE, OF COURSE, MOST INTERESTED IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENTS REGARDING THE USG'S COMMITMENT TO (A) MINIMIZE TRADE RESTRICTIONS, (B) TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AND (C) "PROVIDE SPECIAL AND FAVORABLE TREATMENT WHERE FEASIBLE AND APPROPRIATE."

THE GOM WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PURSUE THE TRADE QUESTION VIGOROUSLY WHEN THE NEW BILATERAL MECHANISM IS ESTABLISHED IN MAY AND OUR ABILITY TO RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY TO MEXICO'S CONCERNS WILL BE CONSIDERED AS IMPORTANT TEST OF THE PRESIDENT'S LATIN AMERICAN POLICY.

THE MEXICANS WILL PARTICULARLY SEEK RELIEF FROM THE 50 LIMITATION ON COMPETITIVE-NEED GROUNDS OF GSP. NEVERTHELESS, AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL GOM OFFICIALS ARE WELL AWARE OF THE ADVANTAGES MEXICO WILL OBTAIN FROM WIDESPREAD REDUCTIONS IN IMPORT RESTRICTIONS COMING FROM THE MTN IN GENEVA.

IN LA CONTEXT, GOM MAY CONTINUE TO CRITICIZE U.S. FOR OPEC EXCLUSION, ALTHOUGH THIS ISSUE HAS BEEN DORMANT RECENTLY AND APPARENTLY IS VIEWED BY PRESENT ADMINISTRATION AS FAR LESS SIGNIFICANT THAN GOM'S PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF OBTAINING SOME FORM OF SPECIAL TRADE BENE-
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FITS FOR MEXICO.

B. HUMAN RIGHTS

AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, MEXICANS HAVE LONG TRADITION OF SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL FORA AND A VERY LIBERAL ATTITUDE TOWARD POLITICAL REFUGEES. WHILE ITS HUMAN-RIGHTS RECORD INTERNALLY IS BY NO MEANS UNBLEMISHED, IT IS BETTER THAN MOST LA NATIONS AND DOES NOT REFLECT A CONSISTENT PATTERN OF INSTITUTIONALIZED VIOLATIONS. INSOFAR AS HUMAN RIGHTS IS A CURRENT ISSUE IN MEXICO, TENDENCY HERE IS TO DOWNPLAY ANY SERIOUS DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AND FOCUS ON ALLEGED EXPLOITATION OR MISTREATMENT OF MEXICANS LIVING ILLEGALLY OR LEGALLY IN U.S. ANY ESSENTIALLY UNILATERAL U.S. ACTIONS TO CONTROL FLOW OF ILLEGALS--SUCH AS THOSE CURRENTLY CONTEMPLATED BY ADMINISTRATION--COULD PROVOKE STRONG PUBLIC REACTION IN MEXICO AND DEPENDING ON THEIR NATURE COULD BE TREATED AS SERIOUS HUMAN-RIGHTS ISSUE.

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FREQUENTLY CANDID ABOUT THEIR OWN SHORTCOMINGS, MEXICANS ARE NONETHELESS PROUD AND NATIONALISTIC AND WOULD REACT ADVERSELY TO ANY U.S. HUMAN-RIGHTS POSITION THAT IS PERCEIVED AS OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE IN THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS. BY EXAMPLE AND PUBLICLY EMPHASIZING IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS, USG CAN PROBABLY COUNT ON MEXICAN SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL FORA AND ALSO ENCOURAGE SELF-CRITICISM AND CORRECTIVE ACTION INTERNALLY. NEVERTHELESS, DIRECT EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE INTERNAL MEXICAN POLICIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS--EXCEPT WHERE U.S. CITIZENS ARE

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CONCERNED--WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH.

C. NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES

WHILE IT IS UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO WILL SIGNIFICANTLY ALTER MEXICO'S BASIC POSITIONS ON THIRD-WORLD OR NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES, WE ARE SEEING A MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH AND GREATER WILLINGNESS TO SEARCH FOR COMPROMISE SOLUTIONS TO THESE COMPLEX ISSUES. FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST THERE WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE OF CONTINUITY IN MEXICAN POLICY BECAUSE THE SAME PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMATS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR BASIC GOM POLICY DECISIONS. ON IMPORTANT AND POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ISSUES, HOWEVER, LOPEZ PORTILLO AND FOREIGN SECRETARY ROEL CAN BE EXPECTED TO EXERCISE A RESTRAINING INFLUENCE ON THE THIRD-WORLD

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PROCLIVITIES OF PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL ACTIVE DURING THE ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION. AS UNDERSECRETARY DE OLLOQUI RECENTLY TOLD A GROUP OF WAR COLLEGE VISITORS, "I PERSONALLY BELIEVE THAT MEXICO WILL SUPPORT YOU ON THE BIG ISSUES, BUT YOU MUST RECOGNIZE THAT OUR NATIONAL POWER AND INTERESTS DIVERGE IN MANY RESPECTS AND THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS DISPARITY WILL BE REFLECTED IN DIFFERING POSITIONS ON A VARIETY OF OTHER QUESTIONS, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF AN ECONOMIC NATURE." WHILE ABRUPT CHANGES IN MEXICO'S POLICY ARE NOT LIKELY, THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE THAT A GREATER EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO CONSULT AND WORK WITH MEXICAN REPRESENTATIVES IN A VARIETY OF INTERNATIONAL FORA.

D. DISARMAMENT

WE BELIEVE PRESIDENT CARTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF U.S. ADHERENCE TO PROTOCOL I IN CONTEXT OF OUR GLOBAL EFFORTS TO RESTRAIN ARMS RACE COULD EVENTUALLY INCREASE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION WITH THE MEXICANS ON WIDE-RANGE DISARMAMENT ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL FORA. THE USG AND MEXICO HAVE FREQUENTLY HAD SIGNIFI-CANT SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCES AND TACTICAL DISPUTES. WE BELIEVE THAT MEXICO'S STRONG COMMITMENT TO DISARMAMENT AND EVOLUTION OF U.S. POSITIONS UNDER THE CARTER ADMIN-ISTRATION COULD LEAD TO A GREATER COINCIDENCE OF INTEREST AND INCREASED OPPORTUNITY FOR COOPERATION.

E. PANAMA

REGARDING U.S. NEGOTIATIONS OF NEW AND MUTUALLY ACCEPT-ABLE CANAL TREATY WITH PANAMA, MEXICO ON IF-ASKED BASIS HAS ALREADY OFFERED ITS GOOD OFFICES WHILE CLARIFYING THAT IT HAS NO INTENTIONS OF INJECTING ITSELF DIRECTLY INTO CURRENT TALKS. MEXICO, LIKE OTHER LA COUNTRIES, IS POLITICALLY SUPPORTIVE OF PANAMA'S DESIRE FOR A NEW CANAL ARRANGEMENT, BUT LOPEZ PORTILLO IS REASONABLE MAN WHO UNDOUBTEDLY RECOGNIZES IMPORTANT U.S. INTERESTS ARE INVOLVED AND MUST BE REFLECTED IN NEW TREATY. PANAMA HAS MADE ACTIVE EFFORT TO INFORM MEXICANS OF THEIR POSITIONS AND TO ELICIT SUPPORT. GOM, HOWEVER, IS ALSO INTERESTED IN HIGH-LEVEL BRIEFING BY USG NEGOTIATORS. CONFIDENTIAL

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AS NEGOTIATING SCHEDULE PERMITS, SUCH A BRIEFING COULD BE VERY USEFUL, PARTICULARLY IF PROBLEMS SHOULD ARISE WHERE MEXICAN UNDERSTANDING--AND HOPEFULLY, PRIVATE SUPPORT--FOR U.S. POSITIONS COULD BE HELPFUL IN ENCOURAGING PANAMANIANS TO DEMONSTRATE GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN REACHING ACCOMMODATION.

F. CUBA

MEXICANS ARE STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF CURRENT TREND TOWARD EVENTUAL RENEWAL OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND CUBA, AND WOULD PROBABLY BE WILLING TO PLAY ANY ROLE AS INTERMEDIARY THAT WE WOULD CONSIDER HELPFUL IN FURTHERING THIS OBJECTIVE. THOMPSON

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